



KANSAS CITY

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2012

Nature & You

News and Events from Missouri Department of Conservation

Partnerships help forge conservation's next generation

For conservation educators, teenagers at times can seem like a nearly impossible audience to connect with nature. They are texting, on Facebook, playing video games, hanging out and BUSY! So how can we have an impact on this elusive age group?

Partnerships with youths and youth programs are creating outdoor connections for visitors at the Burr Oak Woods Nature Center and the Anita B. Gorman Discovery Center.

At Burr Oak Woods, the story began several years ago with the Conservation Kid's Club for children ages 7 to 13. They get together to fish, create solar-powered ovens to bake pizza, map caves, explore streams and discover letterboxing. The children learn together how to track deer. They share an overnight camp and experience solitude in the middle of a prairie at night.

But time passes and the first members began to turn 14. The youths didn't want to quit participating in Conservation Kid's Club and our staff did not want to turn them away. So they became "advisors" for the younger kids. The teens were proud of their new role for a while, but they also wanted more challenges.

Over time, the idea evolved into the Youth Volunteer Program at Burr Oak Woods. This gave youths ages 14 to 17 an opportunity to further explore nature and outdoor skills programs. For some, it is also a chance to explore a possible career working for the Missouri Department of Conservation.

In 2008, the first class of youth volunteers attended the same

Green Works teens Trashaun, Felix and Jakevion built wood duck nest boxes and bat houses to help improve wildlife habitat in urban Kansas City.



GENERATION NEXT

training as the adult volunteers. Teens and adults now work side by side and all agree that both benefit from mentoring and sharing. Burr Oak Woods' youth volunteers have contributed 2,342 hours of service.

The youth volunteers gain real-world experience working with MDC professionals in the outdoor education and natural resource management fields. They make connections and build work references that are valuable as they approach their college years.

Visitors gain because the youths are energetic and enthusiastic about the outdoors and life in general. In a modern world where people are often disconnected from nature, these kids are passionately connected and making a difference.

The Discovery Center in part-

nership with Green Works offers another path to nature and the outdoors for teens. Green Works, developed by Kate Corwin, is a private, nonprofit environmental education and workforce development program for urban high school students.

Students spend two afternoons a week attending class sessions

"In a modern world where people are often disconnected from nature, these kids are passionately connected and making a difference."

or working on service projects. They learn about the relationships between people and nature in their urban environment. Service projects provide them with work skills and experience in conservation and environmental progress. Plus those projects implement positive changes for their community.

Green Works participants take a boat journey on the Missouri River and then they visit the Kansas City Water Department treatment plant. They see where their drinking water comes from and why pollution issues matter. The youths also visit the Discovery Center to learn about water quality and wildlife within their neighborhoods.

Some projects are hands-on. Green Works students and volunteers in 2010 began restoring wild-

Continued on back page

Burr Oak Woods

CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER

Located in Blue Springs, Missouri, one mile north of I-70 and one mile west of MO 7 on Park Road. Six trails, 1,071 wooded acres, two picnic areas, indoor wildlife viewing area, 3,000 gallon native fish and turtle aquarium, hands-on nature exhibits, gift shop, and sales of fishing and hunting permits.



1401 NW PARK ROAD
BLUE SPRINGS, MISSOURI 64015

HOURS: Nature Center

Tuesday–Friday: 7 AM–6 PM

Saturday: 8 AM–5 PM

Area and Trails

Daily: 7 AM–6 PM

Daylight Savings Time: 7 AM–8 PM

Closed Thanksgiving & Christmas

HOW TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. **Call 816-228-3766** to sign up for a *Registration required* program on or after the first business day of that month.

<http://mdc.mo.gov/node/280>

PROGRAMS & EVENTS JANUARY & FEBRUARY

DISCOVER NATURE FAMILIES:

NATURE AT NIGHT

JANUARY 5 / THURSDAY / 6:00–7:30 PM

Registration required beginning December 20

(Families) When the sun sets, the woods come to life even in the coldest winter months.

Exploring nature with your family is especially exciting and rewarding at night! Bring your family



to Burr Oak Woods as we head outside to discover the world of nature illuminated by an almost full moon.

SNAKES ALIVE!

JANUARY 7 / SATURDAY / 1:30–2:30 PM

No registration required (All ages) Slither on in to the nature center for a scaly good time! Discover how snakes are one of the most surprising groups of animals during this hands-on interactive program. You may even get a chance to see how snakes consume their prey.

CONSERVATION KID'S CLUB: GAME NIGHT

JANUARY 10 / TUESDAY / 6:30–8:00 PM

Registration required (Ages 7–13) Join in on the fun as we test our knowledge about the fish, forests and wildlife in Missouri in a zany game show format. Are you prepared for a little friendly competition?

LITTLE ACORNS: TRACKS IN THE SNOW

JANUARY 11 / WEDNESDAY / 10:00–11:00 AM
OR 1:00–2:00 PM

Registration required (Ages 3–5) Would you know a deer track if you saw one? How about raccoon tracks? Come learn about the tracks you might see on a hike while making tracks of your own!

HOME SCHOOL: NATURE'S STORY

JANUARY 11 / WEDNESDAY / 10:00–11:30 AM FOR
AGES 6–8, 9–11, 12–18 OR 1:00–2:30 PM FOR AGES 6–8

Registration required Like a weaver making fabric, the connections between animals and plants create a strong community that humans interact with. Uncover strands that connect us all through their stories.

ANIMAL WINTER SURVIVAL

JANUARY 14 / SATURDAY / 10:00–11:30 AM

Registration required (All ages) Surviving harsh temperatures is but one of the many obstacles that await the local plants and animals that call Missouri home. Discover survival strategies they use to endure the long winter months.

BABES IN THE WOODS: WINTER GAMES

JANUARY 17 / TUESDAY / 10:00–11:00 AM

Registration required (Babes under 36 months)

Just because it is winter doesn't mean you can't play outside. Join Naturalist Kathleen for some outdoor fun. If there is snow, bring your sled!

Winter can be a magical time to create special memories with your little one.

SQUIRRELS TAKE A HOLIDAY

JANUARY 21 / SATURDAY / 1:00–2:00 PM

Registration required (All ages) It is National

Squirrel Appreciation Day! Come out to Burr

Oak Woods to participate in some squirrel activities and sightings. You may also learn some new things you never knew about these crafty backyard critters.



What's for dinner?

Join us as we feed the
critters on exhibit
at Burr Oak Woods

Conservation
Nature Center

every Saturday and
Wednesday at 3:00 p.m.

ROCKIN' & READIN' NATURE TALES

JANUARY 28 / SATURDAY / 11:00 AM–12 NOON

Walk-in (Ages 2 and up) Join us for a story hour as we lead you on fantastic nature adventures!

We will meet butterflies, birds, mammals and all sorts of magnificent creatures. We will cross rivers, discover mysteries within the forest and fly across the prairies. Our imaginations are the only limits.

COOKING WILD: SQUIRREL

JANUARY 28 / SATURDAY / 1:00–2:30 PM

Registration required (Adults) Many Missouri hunters began with and continue to hunt for one critter; squirrels! Squirrels are plentiful, fun to hunt and they can make great table fare. Join us as we explore hunting, skinning and most importantly cooking these bushy-tailed mammals.

NATURE'S NURSERY: NOT IN MY YARD!

FEBRUARY 4 / SATURDAY / 10:00–11:00 AM

No registration required (Adults) At this time of year, wild parents begin to prepare for the arrival of their babies. They are so cute but often cause real problems around our homes. Just how do you counteract persistent parents who are eyeing your attic or garden as a nursery? Join Naturalist Kathleen to learn why animals are attracted to your property and ways to deter them.

CONSERVATION KID'S CLUB:

THE RETURN OF DR. NUTCASE

FEBRUARY 7 / TUESDAY / 6:30–8:00 PM

Registration required (Ages 7–13) Doctor Nutcase is coming to Conservation Kids Club! He needs our help so we will be research assistants and conduct a cool science experiment. We will be learning about the scientific method and attempting to unlock some amazing mysteries of science.

LITTLE ACORNS: WE LOVE NATURE!

FEBRUARY 8 / WEDNESDAY / 10:00–11:00 AM
OR 1:00–2:00 PM

Registration required (Ages 3–5) There are many fantastic things to love about nature. Let's share what you enjoy in nature and why. Learn ways to conserve the beauty and wonder of nature so that it may be around for a long time. You will also make your own work of art to display in our nature center for all to see!

HOME SCHOOL: WE LOVE RAPTORS

FEBRUARY 8 / WEDNESDAY / 10:00–11:30 AM FOR
AGES 6–8, 9–11, 12–18 OR 1:00–2:30 PM FOR AGES 6–8

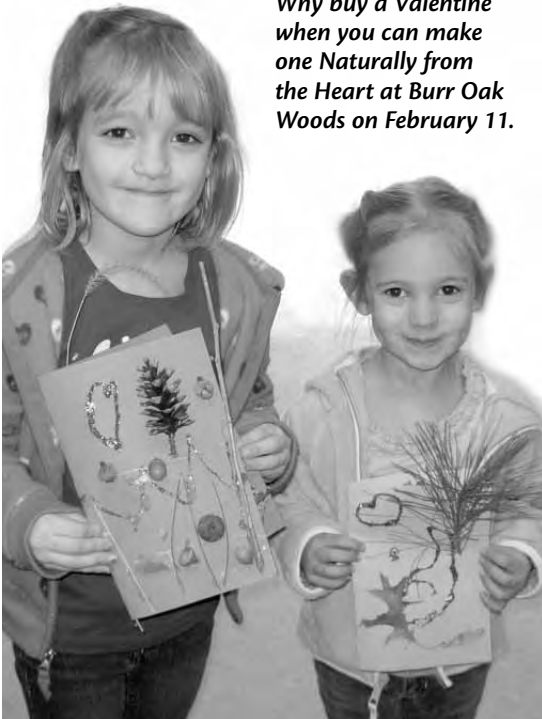
Registration required Seize this opportunity to get close and learn about some amazing live birds of prey! Lakeside Nature Center will be here to help us discover some astonishing adaptations of raptors and the important role they play in the food web.



NATURALLY FROM THE HEART

FEBRUARY 11 / SATURDAY / 10:00–11:00 AM
Registration required (All ages) Why buy that special someone a Valentine card when you can make your very own from the beautiful materials nature supplies? We will provide the natural materials, so come to Burr Oak Woods to make something truly unique and special for your Valentine.

*Why buy a Valentine
when you can make
one Naturally from
the Heart at Burr Oak
Woods on February 11.*



*Woodchucks,
also known as
groundhogs,
are true hiber-
nators emerg-
ing from their
underground
burrows in late
February.*

NATURE IS WAKING UP

FEBRUARY 18 / SATURDAY / 1:00–2:00 PM

Registration required (All ages) It is wintry outside, but somewhere sleeping critters are starting to stir. We just celebrated Groundhog Day, which reminds us that the amazing and colorful world of spring is just around the corner. Join us as we discuss woodchucks and other hibernating animals and then head outside to enjoy late winter in Missouri.

BABES IN THE WOODS: FURRY WINTER FUN

FEBRUARY 21 / TUESDAY / 10:00–11:00 AM

Registration required (Babes under 36 months) During the winter we turn our thermostats up and add layers of clothes and blankets for warmth. Join Naturalist Kathleen for some indoor fun as we learn about animals that stay active throughout the long winter chill in this hands-on learning experience.

ROCKIN' & READIN' NATURE TALES

FEBRUARY 25 / SATURDAY / 11:00 AM–12 NOON

Walk-in (Ages 2 and up) Join us for a story hour as we lead you on fantastic nature adventures! We will meet butterflies, birds, mammals and all sorts of magnificent creatures! We will cross rivers, discover mysteries within the forest and fly across the prairies. Our imaginations are the only limits.

DISCOVER NATURE FAMILIES: MAPLE SUGARING

FEBRUARY 25 / SATURDAY / 1:00–3:00 PM

Registration required (Families with children of all ages) In our culture with supermarkets in every neighborhood, it is magical and spectacular to be able to make something delicious to eat out of liquid flowing out of a tree. Savor this wonder of nature by learning how to tap trees, collect sap and make delicious syrup from native trees.



Enter the Burr Oak Woods photography contest

Did you capture something beautiful at Burr Oak Woods this year? Each year our visitors take thousands of wonderful photographs highlighting the beauty and diversity of our site. If you have a photo you'd like to share, Burr Oak Woods is hosting its annual photography competition and would like to include you! Photos must have been taken at Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area and may include landscapes, wildlife, people or events. The first-place winner will appear in the July-August issue of the *KC Nature and You* newsletter.

Completed entries must be received before 6 p.m. on Feb. 28. Each entry must include a completed entry form, which is available at the nature center or at <http://mdc.mo.gov/node/280>. Entry forms and photos can be dropped off at the front desk or mailed to Burr Oak Woods CNC, 1401 NW Park Road, Blue Springs, Mo. 64015.

The contest is open to Missouri residents. There is a limit of two photos per person. Photos must be 8 x 10 inches and matted. The entrant's name must not be on the photo or mat. First, second and third place ribbons will be awarded. All photos will be on display throughout March and the winners announced on March 21. Good luck!



Dynamic landscape art on display at Burr Oak Woods

Landscape paintings created by Ken Chapin will be displayed at Burr Oak Woods Nature Center in January. Chapin taught art for 31 years in the Independence School District. He now focuses on landscape painting. Chapin recently won second place in the Best of Show category at the Big Cedar Lodge 2011 Paint Out at Table Rock Lake. Paintings in the exhibit will include scenes from Burr Oak Woods.

For those who would like to meet Chapin and watch him work, he will be working on a landscape painting at Burr Oak Woods from 1 to 3 p.m. on Jan. 7.

Lake City

SHOOTING RANGE & OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTER

Located on 60 acres of forests and fields near Blue Springs, Missouri, six miles north of I-70 on MO 7 and two miles east of MO 7 on Truman Road in Landahl Park. Facilities include an outdoor education center, archery, pistol, rifle and shotgun ranges, including skeet and trap.



28505 E. TRUMAN ROAD
LANDAHL PARK
BUCKNER, MISSOURI 64016

HOURS: May 1 – September 15
Wednesday–Sunday: Noon–6 PM
September 16 – April 30
Wed.–Sunday: Noon–4:30 PM
Closed Monday & Tuesday
and all state holidays

FACILITIES AND FEES: Available for individual or group use. Call for information and possible restrictions.

- Rifle/pistol range: \$3.00 booth per hour
- Trap/Skeet: \$3.00 per round per person
- Archery range: \$3.00 per person per hour

HOW TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 816-249-3194 to sign up for a *Registration required* program.
<http://mdc.mo.gov/node/282>

DISCOVER NATURE FAMILIES: FAMILY TRAP SHOOTING

JANUARY 29 / SUNDAY / 9:00–11:30 AM
Registration required (Families with children ages 12 and up) Trap shooting is a fun shooting sport to experience. Course will cover basic firearm safety, different actions on shotguns, proper shot size, proper firearm fit and shot follow through. Trap is a good way for an upland game hunter to improve their shotgun skills.



BUILD A BLUEBIRD HOUSE

FEBRUARY 4 / SATURDAY / 9:00–11:30 AM
Registration required (All ages) Do you enjoy the outdoors and watching birds? Do you like to work with your hands and construct projects with wood? This simple bluebird house building project is ideal for parents and children, scout troops or anyone who enjoys wood working. All materials are provided and participants will take home a bird house for their backyard.



HUNTER EDUCATION CLASS

FEBRUARY 7–9 / TUESDAY–THURSDAY / 6:00–10:00 PM

Online registration only at <http://mdc.mo.gov/node/3477>

(Ages 11 and up) The goal of hunter education classes is to produce safer, more knowledgeable, responsible and involved hunters. Discover the joys of hunting in this three night class designed to meet all requirements for those who wish to hunt using firearms. Registration required for this three evening class.

NRA FIRST STEP: PISTOL

FEBRUARY 25 / SATURDAY / 9:00–11:30 AM
Registration required (Adults) The NRA First Step Pistol course is an introductory course in the safe handling, storage and cleaning of pistols. The course is taught by NRA-certified pistol instructors following an NRA approved course curriculum. The course features high levels of student participation both in the classroom and on the range. Students will have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with and shoot pistols on the range.

Lake City Range hosts young hunters

The Lake City Range and Outdoor Education Center hosted an NRA Youth Hunter Education Challenge in August. Staff helped 65 students from the Lee's Summit Home School Group learn firearms safety and hunting basics.

The event began with students shooting .22 caliber rifles at targets on the 25-yard line. Many had never fired a firearm before, and after shooting 25 rounds, all of them wanted to try their skills again with the .22 rifles.

Students divided into teams to tackle all the second day's events. One of the most popular and challenging contests was wildlife identification. Students were brought into the classroom and shown bones, pelts, and other parts of animals that are native to Missouri. They wrote down what they thought was the correct name of the animal based on the animal part or pelt. Many of the younger students found this part of the challenge fun and very informative.

A "Shoot Don't Shoot" walk through was an event the older students enjoyed. The hands-on activity required the young hunters to cross obstacles while controlling their firearm properly, identify their target and then make a decision to shoot or not to shoot. This exercise teaches proper decisions in situations that may come up in the field, such as when an animal may be in range but beyond are other objects or structures that make the shot unsafe.

Awards were handed out for the top teams in three events and there were smiles and happy faces at the ceremony. Afterwards, lunch ended an eventful two days.

– Steve Elliott, Range Supervisor



Young hunters learn how to safely cross a fence with a firearm at the recent NRA Youth Hunter Education Challenge at Lake City Range.

PROGRAMS & EVENTS JANUARY & FEBRUARY

DISCOVER NATURE FAMILIES: INTRODUCTION TO SKEET SHOOTING

JANUARY 21 / SATURDAY / 9:00 AM–12 NOON
Registration required (Families with children ages 12 and up) Tired of trap shooting and looking for a quicker game? Why not try skeet shooting? Skeet



shooting is a great way to enjoy a new sport while improving your basic shotgun skills and hit ratio on winged game.

WOODCARVING 101

JANUARY 28 / SATURDAY / 9:00 AM–1:00 PM
Registration required (Adults) Would you like to add personality to a hiking or walking stick? We will show you some old-time techniques in carving faces or figures on the handle of a walking stick. The class is limited to eight participants so register early.

Parma Woods

SHOOTING RANGE & OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTER

Located in Platte County, Missouri. Go west of downtown Parkville on Route FF to River Road, then west 3 miles to the entrance located just west of I-435. Facilities are available for individual or group use and include a rifle/pistol range, shotgun patterning range, and archery range.



15900 NW RIVER ROAD
(MAIL) PO BOX 14024
PARKVILLE, MISSOURI 64152
HOURS: May 1 – September 30

Friday – Sunday: 10 AM – 4 PM
Monday & Tuesday: 2 PM – 8 PM
October 1 – April 30
Friday – Tuesday: Noon – 4:30 PM
Closed all state holidays

FACILITIES AND FEES: Available for individual or group use. Call for information and possible restrictions.

- Rifle/pistol range: \$3.00 booth per hour
- Shotgun patterning range: \$3.00 per hour
- Archery range: \$3.00 per person per hour

HOW TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:
Programs are free. Call 816-891-9941 to sign up for a *Registration required* program.
<http://mdc.mo.gov/node/283>

PROGRAMS & EVENTS JANUARY & FEBRUARY

DISCOVER HUNTING: FAMILIES RABBIT HUNTING CLINIC

JANUARY 12 / THURSDAY / 6:00–9:00 PM AND
JANUARY 14 / SATURDAY / 6:00 AM–12 NOON
Registration required (Families with children 11 and up) If you're suffering from the winter time blues then bring the whole family out for our



annual rabbit hunt. Not only is rabbit hunting fun, exciting and challenging, but rabbits also make excellent

table fare. During a fun and educational seminar we'll explore rabbit biology, equipment, hunting techniques and of course safety. All participants must be Hunter Education Certified and properly licensed.

WILD GAME COOKING CLASS

JANUARY 18 / WEDNESDAY / 6:00–8:00 PM
Registration required (All ages) Many of Missouri's marvelous critters make magnificent meals. Come on out and discover some tried and true ways for preparing wild game. There will be wild game samples available for tasting, perhaps even some surprises.

INTRODUCTION TO ICE FISHING

JANUARY 26 / THURSDAY / 6:00–8:00 PM
Registration required (All ages) A day spent chillin' out on top of the ice is one of the best ways known to cure your cabin fever. If you've been feeling cooped up or thought that ice fishing sounded like fun, then you need to mark your calendar to attend this class. Our experienced staff will teach you what you need to know to be safe, have fun and maybe even catch a few fish from under the ice.

DISCOVER HUNTING: CROW HUNTING SEMINAR

FEBRUARY 2 / THURSDAY / 6:00–8:00 PM
Registration required (All ages) The American crow is among the smartest birds alive. This makes hunting them challenging and exciting. Viewed as a nuisance in many areas, crow populations grow to devastating numbers without control measures. Hunting can be an effective management tool to keep these populations in check. Attend this seminar to learn about crows and crow hunting.

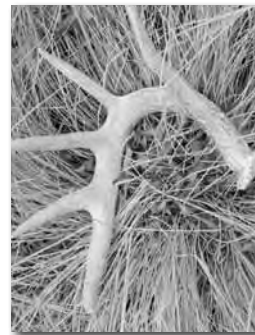


POST-SEASON DEER SCOUTING

FEBRUARY 18 / SATURDAY / 9:00 AM–12 NOON
Registration required (All ages) The post season is one of the best times to get out and go scouting for deer for a number of reasons. A few of the best reasons are that deer signs are easy to locate with the absence of foliage, deer are locked into patterns that will be very similar to next year's deer season patterns and trails tend to look like superhighways. Also the deer have an entire year to forget about those stinky humans walking around on their turf. Join our instructors as we give you some tips on what to look for.

SHED ANTLER HUNTING

FEBRUARY 25 / SATURDAY / 9:00 AM–12 NOON
Registration required (All ages) Many people mistakenly call deer antlers "horns". Horns grow continuously whereas antlers are shed on an annual basis so that new antlers can grow in their place. All cervids, or members of the deer family, exhibit this trait. It can be challenging



to find these shed antlers. But one thing is for sure, it sure is fun to look for them. Join us on a real life shed hunt as we give a few pointers and hopefully find some antlers. You never know what else we might find.

How the Internet can lead to better health

Just a few keystrokes can lead to a wealth of information these days. Did you ever hear the term "cabin fever?" According to Wikipedia, this is a very real problem with noticeable symptoms. The free online encyclopedia provides links to research on the subject and some "cures" for the ailment.

Wikipedia says: "One therapy for cabin fever may be as simple as getting out and interacting with nature. Research has proven that even brief interactions with nature can promote improved cognitive functioning and overall well-being."

Until now, I had never bothered to look up the phrase that I've heard my whole life. I just always knew I didn't like being cooped up indoors. I wonder how people lived for thousands of years without the Internet? But also, it now seems as though the Internet, as useful as it is, is part of the problem because time spent there keeps people away from the outdoors and nature.

Research and even a few books written in the last few years suggest that a disconnection from nature is a very real problem in our culture. Being disconnected from nature affects all aspects of our personal well-being. The physiological and social benefits of nature are too lengthy and complex to list here, but many experts agree that interacting with nature is important.

Luckily, Parma Woods offers great activities to help you connect with nature. To cure your cabin fever or just to have some fun, check out our full line up of activities on our website and attend a few courses. Some suggestions are the **Families Rabbit Hunting Clinic** on Jan. 12 and 14, the **Post-Season Deer Scouting** class on Feb. 18, or the **Shed Antler Hunting** class on Feb. 25. All of these classes involve outdoor experiences that will be educational, stimulating and fun for the whole family.

—Nathan Woodland, Range Supervisor

Located in Kansas City, Missouri, just east of the Plaza near 47th and Troost. Six hands-on workshops explore Missouri's fish, forest, and wildlife with a Lewis and Clark theme. Discovery Center is a showcase for environmental architecture with four acres of native landscaping. Buy books and hunting /fishing permits at the gift shop.



4750 TROOST AVENUE
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI 64110

HOURS: Monday – Friday: 8 AM – 5 PM
1st & 3rd Tuesdays: 8 AM – 9 PM
1st & 3rd Saturdays: 9 AM – 4 PM
Closed all state holidays

HOW TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:
Programs are free. **Call 816-759-7300** to sign up for a *Registration required* program. Programs listed as *Walk-in* are come anytime.
<http://mdc.mo.gov/node/281>

PROGRAMS & EVENTS JANUARY & FEBRUARY

GET OWL'T THERE

JANUARY 3 / TUESDAY / 7:00–8:30 PM
No registration required (All ages) Bring in the new year at Discovery Center and learn about the nocturnal world of owls. We will investigate what these birds of prey eat as we dissect owl pellets. Using recycled materials, we will create a junkyard owl as we learn about owl talons and beaks. In addition, we will learn about owls that live in our region by listening to their calls and studying owl mounts.

REST FOR WRENS

JANUARY 7 / SATURDAY / 10:00 AM–12 NOON OR 12:30–2:30 PM
Reservation required (All ages) As we prepare for the return of spring, so do the animals around us. It won't be long before birds look for places to build their nests. You can help small songbirds by joining us to build birdhouses that you will take home and install near your house. We'll spend a few extra minutes putting personal touches on finished houses with a burning tool. Register by noon, Friday, Jan. 6, 2012.

BACKYARD BRRRRD'S

JANUARY 7 / SATURDAY / 10:00 AM–2:30 PM
Walk-in (All ages) Winter is a perfect time to enjoy Missouri's feathered friends. Join Education Specialists Steve and Brandon in learning all about our backyard birds. You will discover identification skills, learn calls, go on a bird watching hike and more.

A TASTE OF THE SEASON

JANUARY 17 / TUESDAY / 6:00–7:30 PM
Registration required (All ages) Tonight is all about trout! The winter rainbow trout season is upon us, a fish that heats up cool-water fishing. That includes the urban trout stocking at some Kansas City area lakes. So, think positive and know that when you catch your limit you'll need to have a good cooking recipe ready to enjoy fresh fish on the table, too. We will try several recipes for rainbow trout and you get a front row seat for the prep, cooking and tasting!



Fresh rainbow trout is on the menu for "A Taste of the Season" at Discovery Center.

TRACK TO T-SHIRTS

JANUARY 21 / SATURDAY / 10:00 AM–12 NOON OR 1:00–3:00 PM
Registration required (All ages) The ability to identify tracks of Missouri wildlife is a valuable skill for any naturalist or outdoors person. Learn the basics while creating a wearable work of art with molded tracks and textile inks. Bring a t-shirt or use one of ours.

MAKING TRACKS

JANUARY 21 / SATURDAY / 10:00 AM–2:30 PM
Walk-in (All ages) Winter is one of the best seasons to make tracks and head out for a hike in the woods. Animals are on the move for food and the thick canopy of leaves has fallen to reveal new views of the forest. Fresh snow fall and reduced plant cover provide new opportunities for finding animal signs on the winter landscape. Learn about mammal gait and how to identify different tracks in the snow. Take home a sawdust track mold of your favorite Missouri mammal.



SHOW-ME CRITTERS

FEBRUARY 4 / SATURDAY / 10:00 AM–2:30 PM
Walk-in (All ages) Although it's the coldest time of the year there are many critters still on the go in the Show-Me state. We will learn about mammal furs, tracks and scat. We will also learn about our feathered friends active during the winter months. We will also provide the opportunity to interact with live animals and go on a hike to try and locate animals who call wintery Kansas City home.

HUNTER EDUCATION

FEBRUARY 4 / SATURDAY / 8:00 AM–5:00 PM
AND FEBRUARY 7 / TUESDAY / 6:00–9:00 PM
Online registration only at <http://mdc.mo.gov/node/3477> (Ages 11 and up; ages 11–13 must be accompanied by adult) Were you born after 1966 and want to hunt in Missouri? If so, then you need to be a part of this hunter education class at Discovery Center. The course's goals are to develop hunters who demonstrate: safety with firearms, respect for people and property, compliance with laws and regulations and awareness of hunting as a management tool. It is mandatory to attend both days. Please bring a sack lunch on Saturday. For assistance with registration call 816-759-7300.

MAPLE SUGARING

FEBRUARY 18 / SATURDAY / 10:00 AM, 11:00 AM, 12 NOON, 1:00 PM OR 2:00 PM
No registration required (All ages) Missouri has a rich history of using its resources wisely, and making sweet syrup is a tasty example of forest conservation. As winter loses its grip on the land, the trees begin to awaken. Sap from deep in the roots starts to make its way to the treetops. February is prime time for tapping Maple trees to collect the sweet bounty within. We will demonstrate how to choose the right tree, how to collect the raw sap and the equipment required to boil sap down to maple syrup or sugar. Join us "on the hour" from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and start your own maple sugaring tradition.

MAPLE SAP SUCKERS

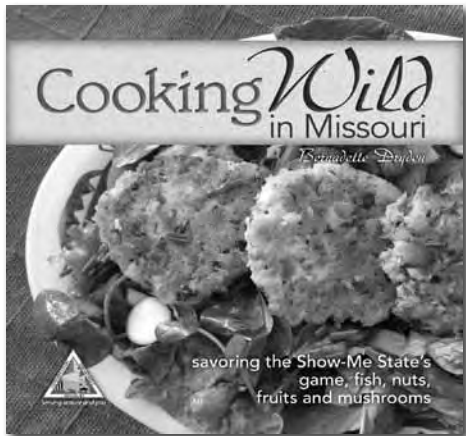
FEBRUARY 18 / SATURDAY / 10:00 AM–2:30 PM
Walk-in (All ages) Not all sap suckers are birds – people do it too, every time we lick maple syrup from our fingers. But maples give us more than tasty pancake toppings. Help us identify all of the things we get from maple trees, from bowling alley flooring to fine furniture to pool cues. Join us in celebrating the beauty of the trees in our landscapes with leaf stamping and more.

TROUT FISHING

FEBRUARY 18 / SATURDAY / 10:00 AM–2:30 PM
Walk-in (All ages) Do you enjoy the beauty and serenity of cold, clear Missouri streams? So do trout. Join us to learn how, where and when to fish for trout. Learn tips for getting away from the crowds and have a great trout fishing experience.

A TASTE OF THE SEASON

FEBRUARY 21 / TUESDAY / 6:00–7:30 PM
Registration required (All ages) Spring is near and our thoughts turn to camping out and foraging for wild edibles. Tonight's class will focus on classic foil-pack cooking (hobo packs) with a wild gourmet twist. We'll try bison meat stuffed with wild mushrooms, hickory nuts and wild greens. Learn the basics while joining us for a taste.



Enjoy the tastes of the seasons

Whether you hunt, fish or forage, a new book published by the Missouri Department of Conservation offers a collection of recipes and fresh ideas for turning your harvest into a mouth-watering feast. "Cooking Wild in Missouri" by Bernadette Dryden features 100 delicious and kitchen-tested recipes highlighting Missouri's game, fish, nuts, fruits and mushrooms.

If you attended December's program promoting the book at the Discovery Center last month, you were fortunate to taste some

of her delicious recipes. Our taste buds were so impressed that we are inspired to present a new series of Tuesday night programs entitled Taste of the Seasons. The 90-minute presentations will feature seasonal recipes from the book and a few recipes from our own talented staff. We'll also take the kitchen outdoors with Dutch oven and campfire cooking.

The new series kicks off the year with a winter fishing classic: how to prepare fresh trout. In February, we'll try our hand at a campfire classic on foil-pack cooking with bison and elk meat. For dates and descriptions, please check the adjacent event listings. Future programs will feature seasonal specialties such as wild mushroom pizza, fire-grilled frog legs and wild berry ice cream sundaes.

If your taste buds run on the wild side, or if you just want to improve your campfire cooking skills beyond a stick and a hotdog, then join us for a delicious new series starting this month.

American goldfinches brighten Kansas City

TSSEE-TSI-TSI-TSIT!! That's the call of the American goldfinch. This small bird is part of the finch family, a native to Missouri that lives year round in the Kansas City area. The bird often makes this call in flight as part of a flock, making it one of the most identifiable birds in our area by sound as well as sight.

One recognizable characteristic of the goldfinch is its color. Like many birds, it is easy to distinguish between the male and female. The male goldfinch has bright, vibrant yellow plumage during the summertime, while the females are a dull yellow-brown. Another interesting feature about goldfinches is that during the winter time the male will molt or shed his bright feathers, which are then replaced by olive-colored feathers during cooler months.

Many birds head for warmer climates during the winter months.



But goldfinches stay in Missouri. With a little help from you, you can attract these winter dwellers to your neighborhood. Goldfinches have cone-shaped beaks which are perfect for eating the dandelion, sunflower and other small plant seeds which make up their diet. By filling your bird feeder with the small seeds of the Niger plant, or finely-chipped sunflower seeds, you will ensure that the wonderful call of the goldfinch will be heard in all seasons.

—Brandon Pope, Education Specialist



Winter's Sweet Treat

There are two dangers in not owning a farm: the belief that heat comes from the furnace and food comes from the supermarket. — Aldo Leopold

A recent craving for Sunday morning waffles sent me to the supermarket to stock up on some breakfast ingredients. When I passed the maple syrup section, I picked up a few bottles and read the ingredients. Surprisingly, most were maple syrup impostors. Over 90 percent of pancake toppings sold today use artificial maple flavoring and sweeteners.

Real maple syrup, on the other hand, is composed primarily of sucrose made in the leaves of sugar maple trees all summer long. Sunlight triggers photosynthesis which utilizes water and carbon dioxide to create sugar and oxygen, both wonderfully useful for people and wildlife.

The unique flavor of maple syrup comes from a mix of amino acids found in the tree sap. Most of a tree's summer sugar production goes into growth and plant maintenance. But sugars that remain in autumn can be a syrupy treat for the industrious few. Maple tree sap is especially high in sugar content if collected properly in late winter when the roots are pumping sap to the branches. And with patient cooking, the watery liquid will evaporate down to viscous, amber-colored syrup.

Thanks to the sun, maple trees and a bit of hard work by people "tapping" the trees, we get to enjoy a sweet winter treat. One that's perhaps available even in your own backyard. So, as you put a fresh log in the fireplace remember the words of the great conservationist, Aldo Leopold, and consider collecting some tree sap along with your firewood this winter.

Interested in learning more? Come on down to the Discovery Center on Feb. 18 for a closer look at maple syrup making.

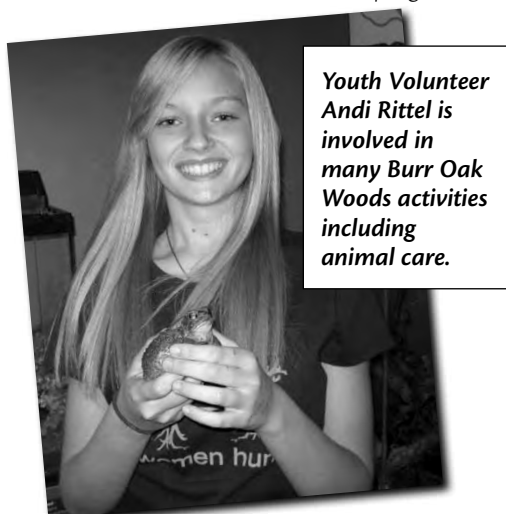
—Shea Bergman, Education Specialist

GENERATION NEXT

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life habitat at a natural oxbow on Brush Creek. They planted native Missouri grasses, wildflowers and trees on the banks of the former creek channel, a still-water home for Canada Geese. At the Discovery Center, they've built bat, wren and wood duck houses. These are later installed in other neighborhoods to increase wildlife diversity along Brush Creek and in the city.

A summer internship program for Green Works students places them at several urban sites with environmental or nature programs.



Youth Volunteer Andi Rittel is involved in many Burr Oak Woods activities including animal care.

If you visit the Discovery Center in summer you may find these teens planting, watering, mulching, weeding and educating in our native plant gardens. Just as likely, you may see them teaching a group of six-year-old students how to transplant and care for their first plant in the green house. The summer interns see their classroom lessons come to life and they observe the food chain interactions become reality. They witness first-hand the connection between planting purple coneflowers in the spring, nurturing them in summer as flowers provide nectar for butterflies and the seeds that emerge to provide winter food for goldfinches.

Green Works students support the MDC mission of caring for and helping others discover nature. Within Kansas City's heart, these teens are actively engaged in making conservation a part of their daily lives. They are the next generation and proving that they will continue Missouri's impressive outdoor heritage and stewardship.

Partnerships, especially volunteers are important for conservation. We challenge you and your family in this new year to take inspiration from our teen partners. Get outdoors to connect with nature and contact our offices if you wish to get involved.

— Lisa LaCombe, Manager Burr Oak Woods
and Wendy Parrett, Assistant Manager
Anita B. Gorman Discovery Center

Winter trout fishing begins at three area locations

A green and silver fish splashed with crimson is back in Kansas City for the winter. Rainbow trout were recently stocked at some area lakes to offer the public additional winter fishing opportunities.

About 1,000 trout were stocked (on Wednesday, Nov. 16) at two lakes at the Fountain Bluff Sports Complex in Liberty, 2200 E. Old 210

Highway, one-half-mile east of Missouri 291. The trout fishing there is a cooperative effort between MDC and the Liberty Parks and Recreation Department.

Chaumiere Lake in the Kansas City park system, at Northeast 43rd Street and North Indiana Avenue, also received almost 1,000 trout.

The Plover and Coot Lakes at the James A. Reed Memorial Wildlife Area near Lee's Summit received about 2,000 trout each. Also at the Reed Area, the Honker pond open to youths age

15 and under was stocked with 200 trout.

Trout are not native to Missouri and cannot survive warm summer water temperatures in the Kansas City region. However in winter when the water cools, the trout can survive and they provide unique fishing opportunities in small urban ponds or lakes.

The daily limit is four trout per angler. Statewide fishing permit regulations apply, and anglers of all ages who keep the trout they catch must have a \$7 Missouri Trout Permit.

Most trout stocked in the lakes are 11 to 12 inches long, a good size for catching and eating. They were raised at a Conservation Department hatchery at Bennett Spring State Park.

Anglers often use prepared baits with scent that attracts trout to catch them, said Bob Matucks, an MDC fishery biologist. Artificial lures such as spoons and jigs are effective. Fly rod anglers also do well with flies or micro jigs.

Three additional trout stockings are scheduled during the coming winter months for the lakes at Fountain Bluffs and Chaumiere Lake. Two additional stockings are slated for lakes at the Reed Area. Advance dates are not given for trout stocking at the urban lakes because weather often dictates the schedule. But a hotline is available that gives anglers the latest date when trout were stocked: 816-525-0300, ext. 4001.

—Bill Graham

Naturescaping Workshop & Native Plant Sale



Saturday, March 17, 2012

Workshop: 8 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

(Registration required beginning Feb. 1)

**Native Plant Sale by Missouri Wildflower Nursery
1:15 – 3:45 p.m.**

(or while supplies last)

**Burr Oak Woods
Conservation Nature Center
1401 NW Park Road
Blue Springs, Missouri
816-228-3766**

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

FOR JANUARY & FEBRUARY

**Discovery Center, Lake City and
Parma Woods are closed all
state holidays. As a result, these
Missouri Department of
Conservation sites
will be closed:**

**Monday, January 2
Monday January 16
Monday, February 13
Monday, February 20**